

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as indicated below. The language being added is underlined ("__") and the language being deleted contains either a strikethrough (" ") or is enclosed by double brackets ("[[]]").

LISTING OF CLAIMS

1. (Currently Amended) A suture needle comprising:

a shaft and a puncture tip at one end of a curve of the shaft,

wherein the shaft is marked with a visual indicator which defines at least one of a front surface and a rear surface, and

~~wherein the shaft is comprised of a front surface and [[a]] the rear surface [[that]] extend side-by-side along at least a portion of a length of the shaft and wherein the shaft is marked at least partially with a visual indicator, and~~

~~wherein the rear surface is distal the puncture tip, and wherein at least one of the rear surface and the front surface includes the visual indicator.~~

2. (Previously Presented) The suture needle of claim 1, wherein the front surface is proximal the puncture tip, the front surface including a visual indicator.

3. (Previously Presented) The suture needle of claim 1, wherein the visual indicator is a color.

4. (Canceled)

5. (Original) The suture needle of claim 4, wherein the visual indicator is a color.

6. (Previously Presented) The suture needle of claim 1, wherein the front surface is proximal the puncture tip, the front surface including a first visual indicator;

and the rear surface is distal the puncture tip, the rear surface including a second visual indicator;

wherein the first visual indicator is visually distinct from the second visual indicator.

7. (Original) The suture needle of claim 6, wherein the first visual indicator is a first color and the second visual indicator is a second color.

8. (Original) The suture needle of claim 7, wherein approximately the entire front surface is comprised of the first color and approximately the entire rear surface is comprised of a second color.

9. (Original) The suture needle of claim 1, wherein the suture needle aids in visual perception of the angle of orientation of the needle.

10. (Original) The suture needle of claim 1, wherein the suture needle is chosen from: a needle with a curved cylindrical shaft, a straight needle, a ski needle, a cutting needle, and a tapered needle.

11. (Currently Amended) A suture needle comprising:
a puncture tip; and
a shaft extending from the puncture tip, the shaft including means for
distinguishing between a front surface of the shaft and a rear surface of the shaft,
wherein the front surface and the rear surface extend side-by-side along ~~at least a~~
~~portion of the length of the shaft.~~

12. (Original) The suture needle of claim 11, wherein the shaft comprises a
curved cylindrical shaft extending from the puncture tip, and
wherein the means for distinguishing between a front surface that is proximal the
puncture tip and a rear surface that is distal the puncture tip.

13. (Original) The suture needle of claim 11, wherein the means for
distinguishing between the front surface and the rear surface is a color.

14. (Original) The suture needle of claim 11, wherein the suture needle is chosen
from: a needle with a curved cylindrical shaft, a straight needle, a ski needle, a cutting
needle, and a tapered needle.

15-19. (Canceled)

20. (Currently Amended) A method of making a suture needle, comprising the steps of:

providing a suture needle; and

marking at least a portion of the suture needle with a visual indicator, wherein the portion extends at least partially the length of the suture needle, wherein the step of marking a portion of the suture needle comprises marking a surface of a shaft of the needle chosen from a front surface and a rear surface, wherein the front surface is the surface inside a curve of a shaft of the suture needle, and wherein the rear surface is the surface outside the curve of the shaft of the suture needle.

21. (Canceled)